

ALP Leadership's fear of the USA underpins their foreign policy decisions

(Music fades in and out)

ANDREW 1: Good morning listeners. My name's Andrew and with me is Bevan Ramsden. We're from IPAN, the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network. In today's CICD Alternative News we examine the Albanese ALP government's abject subservience to US foreign policy. We suggest that it is motivated by fear of the USA and explain the historical reasons for this. The ALP Government has fully embraced the AUKUS war pact secretly initiated by the Morrison Coalition government and has gone even further towards involving Australia in a US war on China by, amongst other things, agreeing to purchase nuclear-powered long range hunter-killer submarines at a cost of 368 billion dollars and by allowing the stationing of nuclear-capable B52 bombers at RAAF Tindal. Bevan, is this policy supported by the Australian community?

BEVAN 1: On the contrary, there is a rising tide of community opposition to these craven and dangerous policy decisions. This year, a Lowy Institute poll found that 56 percent of Australians favour a policy of neutrality in a war between the US and China over Taiwan, with this sentiment highest among young Australians. Trade unionists have been vocal in opposing AUKUS, especially regarding the planned construction of a nuclear submarine base on Australia's east coast. A group of 120 academics recently signed a letter to the Prime Minister opposing AUKUS and the acquisition of nuclear submarines. A group of ALP members in NSW have founded 'Labor against War' (LAW) and have issued a statement opposing AUKUS and the drive to war with China. The 2023 Queensland ALP State Conference and the Brighton, Victoria, branch of the ALP have also passed resolutions condemning AUKUS. Former Prime Minister Paul Keating has condemned AUKUS and the drive to war with China over Taiwan as has former NSW premier and foreign minister Bob Carr. Former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has also criticised AUKUS.

ANDREW 2: Yet, despite widespread and growing opposition to AUKUS in the ALP rank and file and the wider community, Prime Minister Albanese has declared that this war pact will go ahead, sending a message to the community that its views count for nothing. One has to ask why the ALP leadership is so determined to ignore rank and file and community opinion and follow the Liberal Coalition in supporting Australia's commitment to AUKUS and the spending of \$368 billion on nuclear-powered propelled submarines. One might also ask why the ALP government is unwilling to secure the release of Julian Assange, an Australian citizen who has not been convicted of any crime and is being held in a maximum security UK jail pending a decision on his extradition to the United States, where he faces the prospect of life in jail for exposing US war crimes.

BEVAN 2: The answer to this question may be found in the events leading up to the US-engineered dismissal in 1975 of the ALP government lead by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. The election of the Whitlam ALP government in 1972 resulted in Australia gaining a degree of independence that it has never had before or since.

ANDREW 3: That there was US interference in Australian domestic politics is not in doubt. It is recorded in Hansard that Gough Whitlam made a statement to Parliament in 1977 in which he said: "I never met President Carter but I had a significant meeting with his Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and South Pacific, Warren Christopher. On Wednesday 27th July, 1977 at 8 am Alston had arranged a breakfast meeting in the Qantas VIP room at Sydney Airport. Those present were Alston, Christopher, his aide, my aide Richard Butler and I." Whitlam said of Warren Christopher that:

“He made it clear to us that he had made a special detour in his itinerary for the purpose of speaking to me. The President had asked him to say: That he understood the Democratic Party and the ALP were fraternal parties. That he respected deeply the democratic rights of allies of the US

I ask the honourable members of Parliament to note what he says next:

That the US administration would never AGAIN – I repeat those words: Would never AGAIN interfere in the domestic political processes in Australia and that he would work with whatever government the people of Australia elected....

Mr Deputy Speaker interrupts and says: Order. The honourable member’s time has expired.” That ends the Hansard quote.

(Music fades in and out)

BEVAN 3: The US interference and destabilisation of the ALP government began after Whitlam demanded to know if and why the CIA was running a spy base at Pine Gap near Alice Springs, an electronic eavesdropping installation which, as Edward Snowden revealed in 2013, allows the US to spy on everyone. Snowden also revealed that in the minutes of a meeting with the US Ambassador Mr Whitlam warned “Try and screw us or bounce us and Pine gap will become a matter of contention”.

ANDREW 4: Victor Marchetti, the CIA officer who helped set up Pine Gap, told journalist John Pilger that: “The threat to close Pine gap caused apoplexy in the White House.... and a kind of Chilean coup was set in motion.”

BEVAN 4: Joan Coxsedg wrote an article on the Nugan Hand Bank and the role of the CIA in the removal of the Whitlam government in which she states: “There was however, no statement of intent from Whitlam that his government intended to close Pine Gap. The Pine Gap Treaty was signed on December, 1966 for an initial 9 years and either party could terminate the Treaty thereafter by giving one year’s notice. The critical date for continuing or giving notice was 9th December 1975. Whitlam had stated his government’s policy on foreign military bases in Parliament on 3rd April, 1974 and it is recorded in Hansard as follows: ‘***The Australian Government takes the attitude that there should not be foreign military bases, stations, installations in Australia. We honour agreements covering existing stations. We do not favour the extension or prolongation of any of those existing ones***’.

On December 9th 1975, Whitlam would have been empowered to act on Pine Gap but didn’t get the chance as he was sacked one month earlier. “

ANDREW 5: Messages intercepted by Pine Gap were decoded by TRW, a CIA contractor. One of the decoders was Christopher Boyce, later tried for espionage by the US for revealing that the CIA had infiltrated the Australian political and trade union elite and that they had referred to the Governor-General of Australia, Sir John Kerr, as “our man Kerr”.

BEVAN 5: At the beginning of November 1975, it was revealed in the press that a former CIA officer, Richard Stallings, had been channelling funds to Doug Anthony, leader of the Country Party, then in the Opposition to the Whitlam government. This was reported in the Australian Financial Review, November 4th, 1975.

ANDREW 6: Former CIA officer Victor Marchetti confirmed to journalist John Pilger that the CIA had indeed funded both opposition parties and the Sydney Sun newspaper of May 4th 1977 reported that the Liberal Party had been receiving CIA funds since the late 1960's.

BEVAN 6: When Whitlam was re-elected for a second term in 1974, the White House sent Marshal Green to Canberra as US Ambassador. Green was an imperious, sinister figure known as the "coup-master" and had played a central role in the 1965 overthrow of Indonesian President Sukarno and the subsequent bloodbath which claimed up to a million lives. In his article 'The British and American Coup that Ended Australia's Independence' John Pilger reported that one of Green's first speeches in Australia, to the Australian Institute of Directors, was described by an alarmed member of the audience as "an incitement to the country's business leaders to rise against the government

ANDREW 7: Furthermore, the Australian Financial Review of April 28th 1977 reported that, on November 8th, another senior defence official held a meeting with Kerr in which he was briefed about the allegations from the CIA that Whitlam was jeopardising the security of American Bases in Australia. The AFR reported that, on that same day, the CIA in Washington informed the ASIO station chief that all intelligence links with Australia would be cut unless a satisfactory explanation was given about Mr Whitlam's behaviour.

BEVAN 7: On November 10th 1975 Whitlam was shown a top-secret message sent from ASIO's office in Washington and sourced to Theodore Shackley, the notorious head of the CIA's East Asia division, who had helped run the 1973 Chilean coup which overthrew the democratically elected government of Dr Salvador Allende.

Shackley's message was read to Whitlam. ***It said the prime minister of Australia was a security risk in his own country.*** The day before Kerr had visited the headquarters of the Defence Signals Directorate, the Australian equivalent of the US National Security Agency, where he was briefed on the "security crisis".

ANDREW 8: On 11th November, the day Whitlam was to inform parliament about the secret CIA presence in Australia, he was summoned by Kerr who invoked the little known "reserve powers" to sack the democratically elected Prime Minister and government. The Whitlam problem was solved, Australia lost its independence and the ALP was permanently cowed into submission. The ALP leadership wants to retain power at all costs and their fear of being given another "Whitlam whipping" deters them from deviating from US foreign policy.

There's much more to be said on this issue, but that's all we have time for now. As always, we welcome listeners comments and suggestions, which can be emailed to peacecentre@cicd.org.au that is peacecentre@cicd.org.au. Good morning and thanks for listening.

(Music fades in and out)